

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully acknowledge receipt of the Office Action mailed May 31, 2007.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 3, 5, 6, and 8 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Itoh et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 6,685,416) in view of *Okino* (U.S. Patent No. 6,215,564); rejected claims 2 and 4 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Itoh* in view of *Okino*, and further in view of *Delfer et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 5,754,434); rejected claim 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Itoh* in view of *Okino*; and rejected claims 10 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Itoh* in view of *Okino*.

By this Amendment, Applicants amend claims 1, 9, and 10. Upon entry of this Amendment, claims 1-6 and 8-11 will remain pending. Of these claims, claims 1, 9, and 10 are independent. Claim 7 was previously canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer, in the Amendment filed December 1, 2006.

The originally-filed specification, claims, abstract, and drawings fully support the amendments to claims 1, 9, and 10. No new matter has been introduced.

Based on the foregoing amendments and the arguments, Applicants traverse the rejections above and respectfully request reconsideration for at least the reasons that follow.

I. 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) REJECTIONS

Claims 1, 3, 5, 6, and 8-11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Itoh* in view of *Okino*. Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's arguments and conclusions and submit that independent claims 1, 9, and 10

are patentably distinguishable over *Itoh* and *Okino* at least for the reasons set forth below.

In order to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), each of three requirements must be met. First, the reference or references, taken alone or combined, must teach or suggest each and every element recited in the claims. Second, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to combine the references in a manner resulting in the claimed invention. Third, a reasonable expectation of success must exist. Moreover, each of the three requirements must "be found in the prior art, and not be based on applicant's disclosure." See M.P.E.P. §2143, 8th ed., February 2003.

Itoh appears to disclose a bookbinding device including a page supply unit 1, a page conveyor unit 4, a cover supplying unit 5, a press unit 8 of bookbinding unit 90 (or "cover pasting device" as referred to by the Examiner, *Office Action*, p. 3, line 5), a cover folding unit 9, a booklet conveyor unit 10, a scrap discharging unit 11, and a heater unit 60 (or "a paste coating device" as referred to by the Examiner, *Office Action*, p. 3, II. 2-3). The page supplying unit 1 includes a sub-clamper 20, which includes a rotation drive mechanism 22 for swinging the sub-clamper 20 about an axis, a table 24 adapted to receive thereon a stack of pages A to be bound by the bookbinding device, and a clamping plate 25 for holding the page stack A down to the table 24. (*Itoh*, col. 5, II. 37-43 and col. 6, II. 51-54). The heater unit 60 includes a rotating heater roller 64 (or "movable paste coating member" as referred to by the Examiner, *Office Action*, p. 7, line

11) adapted to be in contact with a leading end of a continuous sheet 61 of hot melt adhesive material. (*Itoh*, col. 8, line 60 - col. 9, line 5).

As admitted by the Examiner, however, *Itoh*, at least, does not "disclose a front door for opening and closing a front side of a main body of the pasting and bookbinding apparatus, wherein respective front sides of the sheet bundle loading device, the sheet bundle transporting device, the paste coating device, the cover supplying device, the cover pasting device, and the cover folding device, can be opened or closed" (*Office Action*, p. 3, ll. 14-18); "disclose that the sheets are ejected from an image forming apparatus" (*Id.* at p. 4, ll. 3-4); and "disclose wherein the sheet bundle loading device, the holding device, the sheet bundle transporting device, the paste coating device, the cover supplying device...[etc.] are arranged in a single longitudinal line in a vertical direction inside the main body of the pasting and bookbinding apparatus" (*Id.* at p. 4, ll. 9-13). Additionally, *Itoh* fails to teach or suggest wherein the cover pasting device is provided immediately below the paste coating device. Furthermore, *Itoh* fails to disclose wherein the movable paste coating member stands by at an initial position along a longitudinal direction of the end surfaces of the sheet bundle and outside an area of the sheet bundle for a maximum-sized sheet, moves along the longitudinal direction of the end surfaces of the superposed sheet bundle held in an upright position to coat paste during a paste coating processing, and retreats along the longitudinal direction outside the area of the sheet bundle for the maximum-sized sheet after the paste coating processing.

Accordingly, in order to cure the deficiencies of *Itoh*, the Examiner relies on *Okino* and alleges that "Okino teaches the use of a door 13 for an image recording

device 10 that is used for the purpose of exposing the interior of the device." (Office Action, p. 3, ll. 18-19).

Okino appears to disclose an image recording device 10 including a front door 13 and a side door 15 attached to a device base 12. The interior of the device base 12 can be exposed by opening doors 13 and 15. (*Okino*, col. 13, ll. 8-11). Such teaching, even if present in *Okino*, however, fails to teach or suggest the claimed cover pasting device provided immediately below the paste coating device, as recited in claims 1, 9, and 10, and wherein the movable paste coating member stands by at an initial position along a longitudinal direction of the end surfaces of the sheet bundle and outside an area of the sheet bundle for a maximum-sized sheet, moves along the longitudinal direction of the end surfaces of the superposed sheet bundle held in an upright position to coat paste during a paste coating processing, and retreats along the longitudinal direction outside the area of the sheet bundle for the maximum-sized sheet after the paste coating processing, as recited in claim 9.

As illustrated in FIGs. 1, 3, and 5 of Applicants' drawings, cover pasting device 70 is provided immediately below the paste coating device 60. With such an arrangement, among other things, the period of time required for gluing the cover sheet on the paste-coated back portion of the sheet bundle after coating can be shortened.

Furthermore, as supported by Applicants' specification at page 19, line 22 - page 20, line 16 and FIGs. 5 and 6, "[m]ovable body 64 of paste coating means 60 is moved by an unillustrated driving means in the direction that is in parallel with the longitudinal direction of a bottom surface of sheet bundle Sa held by holding member 51 in the erected state. The movable body 64 starts moving from the initial position outside a

sheet width area of a sheet in the maximum size...and is moved along guide member 65 to stop at a prescribed position on the front surface side of pasting and bookbinding apparatus B, and returns to the initial position after being driven to be reversed...Forward movement...of the movable body 64 makes coating roller 61 to coat paste in the longitudinal direction of the bottom surface of sheet bundle Sa..." With such an arrangement, when the cover sheet is adhered to the end surfaces of the sheet bundle after the paste has been coated thereon, the space for allowing the paste coating device to retreat from a position where the paste coating device interferes with the cover sheet which is lifted up or with the cover pasting device can be minimized.

Accordingly, with respect to independent claims 1, 9, and 10, *Itoh* and *Okino* fail to teach or suggest the claimed combination, including, *inter alia*:

"a cover pasting device provided immediately below the paste coating device" (emphasis added).

Additionally, with respect to independent claim 9, *Itoh* and *Okino* fail to teach or suggest Applicants' claimed combination, including, *inter alia*:

"wherein [a] movable paste coating member stands by at an initial position along a longitudinal direction of...end surfaces of [a] sheet bundle and outside an area of the sheet bundle for a maximum-sized sheet, moves along the longitudinal direction of the end surfaces of the superposed sheet bundle held in an upright position to coat paste during a paste coating processing, and retreats along the longitudinal direction outside the area of the sheet bundle for the maximum-sized sheet after the paste coating processing" (emphases added).

The Examiner has therefore not met at least one of the essential criteria for establishing a *prima facie* case of obviousness, wherein "the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all the claim limitations." See

M.P.E.P. §§ 2142, 2143, and 2143.03. Accordingly, independent claims 1, 9, and 10, and corresponding dependent claims 3, 5, 6, 8, and 11 are patentable over *Itoh* and *Okino*. Applicants therefore request that the rejection of claims 1, 3, 5, 6, and 8-11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

Claims 2 and 4 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Itoh* in view of *Okino*, and further in view of *Delfer*. The deficiencies of *Itoh* and *Okino* are discussed above.

With respect to *Delfer*, the Examiner relies on *Delfer* for allegedly disclosing “a sheet ejection device...used for the purpose of eliminating any non-desired pages.” (*Final Office Action*, p. 5, ll. 15-17). Such teaching, even if present in *Delfer*, however, fails to teach or suggest, *inter alia*, a cover pasting device provided immediately below the paste coating device,” as required by amended claim 1 (emphasis added). Therefore, *Itoh*, *Okino*, and *Delfer* fail to teach or suggest all of the limitations of claim 1, and claims 2 and 4 are therefore patentable over *Itoh*, *Okino*, and *Delfer* at least due to their dependence from independent claim 1. Applicants therefore request that the rejection of claims 2 and 4 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

II. CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 1, 9, and 10 are in condition for allowance. In addition, claims 2-6, 8, and 11 are in condition for allowance at least due to their corresponding dependence from independent claims 1 and 10.

The Office Action contains characterizations of the claims and the related art with which Applicants do not necessarily agree. Unless expressly noted otherwise, Applicants decline to subscribe to any statement or characterization in the Office Action.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and reexamination of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

FINNEGAN, HENDERSON, FARABOW,
GARRETT & DUNNER, L.L.P.

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By: /David W. Hill/
David W. Hill
Reg. No. 28,220